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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 CAIRO 001306

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ELA, AF/SPG, AF/C

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TAGS: PREL SU CD EG

SUBJECT: SUDANESE UMMA PARTY ENGAGING WITH OTHER OPPOSITION PARTIES

REF: CAIRO 1195

Classified By: Minister Counselor for Economic and Political Affairs  
Donald A. Blome for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

**11. (S) Key Points:**

-- According to Former Sudanese PM and Umma Party leader, Imam Al Sadiq Al Mahdi, the Umma Party is reaching out to other opposition parties such as the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) to arrive at a national consensus to solve Sudan's problems and make unity attractive. The Umma Party and the JEM signed a Darfur Declaration of Principles on July 2

-- The Umma Party chose to act because it feels the National Congress Party (NCP) is not looking to resolve the country's problems, but only looking to sign agreements. The NCP government will become "illegitimate" on July 9 according to the Sudanese constitution.

-- A resolution to the Darfur crisis is urgent in order to prevent separatist sentiment from growing. The most challenging problem in Darfur is obtaining a ceasefire between Chad and Sudan, which will require a third-party guarantor.

-- The CPA will not save the country because it is not comprehensive and is based on the "fallacy" that the NCP represents the north and the SPLM represents the south. To succeed it needs to include other parties.

-- The Umma Party is working on an agreement with the SPLM that advocates for a national agenda based on unity, justice, equality, and security for all groups.

-- The U.S. should help to expand the CPA to other parties in the country to achieve national consensus. U.S. engagement with the NCP government sent the wrong message because the NCP has achieved its goal of being "acceptable" to the U.S.

**12. (S) Comment:** The Umma Party is moving to create alliances with other opposition groups, and it plans to challenge the legitimacy of the NCP government because Al Mahdi lacks confidence in the NCP implementing any of the agreements that it has signed. The agreement between the Umma Party and the JEM is noteworthy because it brings together one of the more popular northern political parties and the best-armed militia group in Darfur. Our Sudanese contacts in Cairo are talking about the agreement's significance, which appears to have given the Umma Party a significant boost amongst the Sudanese community in Cairo, which the Egyptian Government estimates between 3-5 million. End Comment.

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## Reaching Out to Other Opposition Parties

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13. (C) Imam Al Sadiq Al Mahdi, told us on June 30 that he was reaching out to other Sudanese opposition parties to reach an agreement to unite efforts to resolve the numerous crises in Sudan. He said that the Umma Party wanted to achieve a national consensus, which he felt was necessary before a solution to Darfur could be realized and free elections could be held. The Umma Party is conducting dialogues with the JEM, SPLM, and the other "opposition" parties to agree on ways to work together to solve the country's problems and make unity attractive. Al Mahdi also met with DUP leader Mohamed Al Mirghani in Cairo (reftel). He said that the two leaders discussed the issues in Sudan and agreed on much, but have not yet signed an agreement to cooperate.

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### NCP Not Seeking Solutions, GoS will be illegitimate

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14. (C) Al Mahdi told us that the Umma Party has chosen to act because he believes that ruling NCP "hawks" have aborted the search for a resolution to the country's problems. He stated that the Government of Sudan (GoS) has invited other Sudanese parties to meetings, encouraged them to participate in initiatives and signed agreements with other parties. He referenced a bi-partisan Umma-NCP agreement, the Sudan People's Initiative, and the NCP-JEM Goodwill Agreement. However, the GoS refuses to implement these agreements. Al Mahdi stated that in the absence of national elections the current Bashir-led NCP government will become illegitimate on

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July 9. He said that the Umma Party must spearhead efforts to organize a national meeting of all parties to create a consensus that will lead to a comprehensive and just peace. He hopes to organize a meeting of the relevant parties in Sudan.

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### The Darfur Declaration of Principles

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15. (C) Al Mahdi told us that the Umma Party was working with JEM to organize the signing of its Declaration of Principles for Peace in Darfur. (Note: The agreement between the Umma Party and JEM was signed on July 2 End Note). He stated that an agreement was already in place between the Umma Party and the "breakaway factions of SLA-Minawi and JEM." Al Mahdi hopes to get all Darfuri factions to sign the declaration. He said that in addition to three parties that have agreed to the Declaration, he believes it is important for SLA-Minawi, SLA-Abdel Wahid, and the Darfuri Arabs to sign. However, the Umma Party has not had success engaging with Abdel Wahid AL Nur whom Al Mahdi described as "isolated" and "a migrant politician

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### Darfur Resolution Needed to Prevent Separatism

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16. (C) Al Mahdi said the Darfur crisis must be solved in the near future or separatist intentions will begin to develop. He praised U.S. efforts to achieve a ceasefire, but stated that all Darfuri factions must agree to the ceasefire or it will not hold. Al Mahdi stated that current intra-Darfuri conflict was a result of militia groups jockeying for land and position to strengthen their position before the ceasefire. However, he warned that any attempt to bypass important Darfuri factions will only create a reason for a new type of conflict. The Darfuri militia groups will not accept a ceasefire without with a political solution.

17. (C) Al Mahdi stated that the challenging problem was between Chad and Sudan. He said that the Chadian and

Sudanese governments distrust each other. Any agreement between the two countries will require a third-party guarantor. Al Mahdi suggested a triumvirate of Egypt, Libya and South Africa could serve as a guarantor. He said that Libya must be included because it could "spoil" everything. Al Mahdi included Egypt and South Africa because both countries are "trusted" and are "the biggest players on the African continent." He said that Libya cannot be the single guarantor because the Government of Sudan believes that Libya favors Chad and Tripoli had a role in the JEM attack on Omdurman in May 2009.

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The CPA Will Not Save Sudan  
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¶8. (C) Al Mahdi told us that the CPA will not save the country because it is not comprehensive and is "based on the fallacy of a Sudanese "bi-opoly." He stated that the premise of the agreement that the NCP represents the North and the SPLM represents the South is "simplistic and untrue". He said that South-South violence was increasing because there are three significant groups that no longer support the SPLM leadership including tribal militias seeking independence, &dissident groups<sup>8</sup>, and the new SPLM-Democracy lead by Lam Akol. Al Mahdi stated that some of the militia groups create a "headache" for SPLM leaders by engaging in violence, while others represent "a political challenge" for SPLM government. He told us that in the North there are also multiple political parties that have the support of the people. Al Mahdi stated that having only having two signatories to the CPA creates trouble and he said that the agreement needs to be expanded to include other parties to be truly comprehensive.

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A Potential Umma Party-SPLM Agreement  
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¶9. (S) Al Mahdi told us that the Umma Party drafted the text of a potential agreement between the Umma Party and the SPLM, which advocates for a unity based on justice, equality, and security for all groups or separation with friendly relations. Al Mahdi shared the document with us. While it guarantees the self-determination rights of the south, it advocates for a return to the Asmara Agreements of 1993 and

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1995 so that self-determination rights will be given to all Sudanese and three options can be considered: cessation, unity, or confederation. The proposal advocates for internally and internationally monitored elections based on quotas rather than the "flawed census," a referendum with voting limited to Southern MPs, an alternative mechanism for investigation charges against President Bashir that is consistent with UNSCR 1593, cooperation with Darfur rebel groups to solve the Darfur crisis, and the inclusion of the agreement in the party platforms of the SPLM and the Umma Party. Al Mahdi told us that he plans to visit Juba in the near future to speak with senior SPLM leaders about the agreement between the two parties. The trip was originally planned for early June, but was delayed because he wanted to associate the trip with the signing of an agreement. (Note: Document passed separately to Sudan desk via e-mail End Note).

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The U.S. Role in Sudan  
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¶10. (C) Al Mahdi believes the U.S. has significant clout in Sudan. He asked the USG to reassess its position and pay attention to the "national problem" in Sudan instead of propagating the myth of the monopolies of the NCP and SPLM. The U.S., because of its role in the CPA, should help to expand the CPA to other parties in the country to achieve national consensus.

¶11. (C) Al Mahdi said that U.S. engagement with NCP government sent the wrong message. NCP leaders do not seriously consider USG proposals to resolve the problems in Sudan. Al Mahdi stated that the goal of the NCP is only to be "acceptable" to the U.S. and the NCP leadership feels that their invitation to Washington to participate in the CPA conference was confirmation of their acceptance. He believes that this attitude is "dangerous and counterproductive" for the future of Sudan. Al Mahdi stated that the Umma Party's goals are peace and democracy and he added that the party wants to work with the USG on achieving "common goals."

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Arab Panel to Capitalize on Obama's Speech  
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¶12. (C) Al Mahdi attended President Obama's speech in Cairo University. He said that the speech created a fresh setting and outlook for both the Islamic and Arab worlds. Al Mahdi stated that President Obama's address resonated with the people. He said that the Sudanese parties now must think about their roles in context with the speech. He said Arab governments were not supportive of the speech because Obama's call for change threatens their existence. In his opinion Arab governments are only interested in seeking good relations with the U.S. because this gives the government legitimacy in the eyes of its people.

¶13. (C) Al Mahdi sent his analysis of the speech to leaders of main political movements and civil society in the Arab world. He invited the leaders to the Center for Cultural Affairs in Cairo on June 27 to discuss the speech. During these discussions the leaders decided to form a panel to respond to the U.S. Administration's desire for dialogue and partnership. According to Al Mahdi, the non-governmental panel includes pro-Western Gulf Arabs, North Africans and the Levant, among which are former statesmen, academics and civil society leaders. The panel is exploring ways to engage with the U.S. to achieve a broad-based peace in the region. Al Mahdi expressed a desire to come to Washington to discuss his ideas.

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